Senate Committee

Submission to the *Inquiry into Teaching and Learning*

The Exodus Foundation is a not-for-profit charity foundation headquartered at Ashfield, in Sydney's Inner West. Our core activities are helping the homeless, the poor, the hungry, the needy and those who can't read.

Our Literacy Centres are dedicated to addressing the reading and literacy needs of older low-progress students as well as younger students who have been identified as at-risk of failure after completing kindergarten. At present we have Centres in Ashfield and Redfern in the Sydney region and one Centre located in Darwin.

Our students are nominated by the Principals from local and regional DET primary and high schools. The students are nominated because they have fallen well behind their peers in reading and related literacy skills. Students must be at LEAST two years behind their chronological age in reading accuracy according to the Neale Analysis of Reading. As a charity foundation, our core business is to assist low income students.

Our Literacy Centres use the researched-based MultiLit (Making Up Lost Time In Literacy) program. This is a catch-up program and fully reflects the recommendations into the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005). The program encompasses explicit instruction in all five key areas identified in the Inquiry; phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training reported, "The knowledge and practical instructional techniques developed in MultiLit by the researchers at Macquarie University should inform and enhance initial and remedial literacy instruction throughout Australia and form the core of remedial reading programs in primary and high schools".

Our program is unique in what it offers. It is the only intensive remedial intervention program available in Australia for the older target groups. The program is a uniquely supporting program, conducted in small groups. Students work at their assessed competency and instructional level. It requires a 6:1 student teacher ratio. This type of intensive instruction is not readily applicable in the regular classroom.

The program functions very effectively. In Sydney students attend the Centres for intensive instruction in the mornings, then returning to their own schools for the afternoon session, thus remaining integrated with their peers (the students are picked up and dropped back by Exodus bus). In Darwin the Centre is incorporated within a school campus, so transport is not an issue. Students participate in the program over a period of 18 weeks.

After 1600 graduates and 16 years of scientific research and student outcome statistics, the Inquiry can be confident that the system we use is the most effective method used in Australia for improving the reading and literacy skills of poorly performing students.

The long term findings indicate that student self image and attitude to learning radically changes. Principals report ongoing success and a powerfully grounded love of reading and learning. Subsequent NAPLAN results are now indicating that the graduate students, on completing the program, go on to continue to develop literacy skills and meet National minimum standards and beyond.

There is a Biblical metaphor, based on the Gospel of Matthew, where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer "The Matthew Effect" (Stanovich , K. 1986 Reading Research Quarterly 21 (4), p 360-407) that can be applied to literacy competencies as much as life in general. Special Education experts agree, that the students who have fallen well behind and slipped through the cracks will continue to fall further and further behind their peers with each passing year UNLESS they receive intensive remedial intervention like the MultiLit program. The (literacy capable) "rich" keep reading and learning, while the (literacy) "poor" read less and continue to fall further and further behind.

Students who have the reading skills to access all areas of the high school curriculum are more likely to complete Year 12 and have better employment prospects. Many of our graduates have gone on to complete further study.

The program has enormous benefits not only to the individuals concerned, their families and their schools, but to the wider community. We have researched the lifetime benefit to cost ratio of our program. It has been independently assessed that for a cost-to-date of $20m, the benefit to society will be as much as $550m in the cohort life time in terms of juvenile justice issues and welfare dependency costs foregone, and income and tax earning benefits accrued.

We recommend to the Inquiry that our Literacy Program be considered for National application to ensure all Australian students have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Exodus Foundation
Rev Bill Crews

"People often say that you can't change the world but I say, if you change the life of one individual then for them the whole world has changed."

We enclose the following reports for the consideration of the Inquiry.

APPENDIX 1. Making Up Lost Time (MULTILIT) Program – Sydney (Sept 2012)
APPENDIX 2 Recent Results of the Program

APPENDIX 1

Making Up Lost Time In Literacy (MultiLit) PROGRAM – Sydney

BACKGROUND

The development of the MultiLit Program began in 1995 at Macquarie University Special Education Centre under the direction of Professor Kevin Wheldall. In 1996 the Exodus Foundation formed a partnership with Professor Wheldall to implement a group version of the one-to-one MultiLit Program. It was seen as a preventative intervention to help ensure students had the literacy skills to access all curriculum areas and in doing so students would have a better chance of completing high school.

The first Exodus Literacy Centre trial included students from Ashfield Primary and Ashfield Boys High School. Today we have two very successful Exodus Literacy Centres in Sydney located in Ashfield and Redfern and one left in Darwin.

THE MULTILIT *GROUP PROGRAM*

"The program reflects the recommendations of the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Reading encompassing explicit instruction in all five of the key areas of, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension."

Data-based

- Standardised Testing - pre and post measures – independent testers
- Curriculum-based Assessment - initial placement of students
- Curriculum-based Measurement – ongoing weekly testing

General Information

- MultiLit is **a catch up program** designed for older low-progress students who have fallen well behind their chronological age in reading and related literacy skills
- Teacher/student ratio 1:6
- 30 MultiLit students and 10 MiniLit per semester
- To qualify for the program students need to be at least 2 years behind their chronological age in reading accuracy according to the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability
- Students attend for 3 hours per day over a period of 18 weeks (9am – 12midday)
- Exodus busses transport students to and from the Literacy Centres
- Programs are designed on the direct Instruction scripted format
- Lessons are of short duration between 15–30 minutes
- Students are placed in ability levels according to their test results
- Skills are taught sequentially and build upon each other in hierarchical order
- Checklists have been developed for each lesson to monitor and give feedback to teachers

THREE KEY AREAS OF MULTILIT

1. MultiLit Word Attack (phonics)
2. MultiLit Sight Words (most common words used in text)

   Common features of the Word Attack and Sight Words programs

   - Placement test
   - Scripted group programs
   - Choral responses
   - Accuracy, Fluency/Revision & Spelling components
   - Test before teaching principle
   - Cumulative review
   - Progress Chart – self reporting and goal setting (1.44 ES)
   - *Model Lead Test* approach
3. MultiLit Reinforced Reading Program
   - Generalisation of newly acquired skills
   - Students are grouped into reading levels according to their weekly 100 word sample test
   - Aim is to have students reading text at a 90-95% accuracy level
   - Delivery is based on a clearly structured format
   - Pause Prompt & Praise (PPP) strategies are used whenever students have difficulty
   - Use of PPP strategies promotes independence in reading
   - Fluency component included

POSITIVE TEACHING

- The success of the MultiLit Program is linked closely to the implementation of the researched-based *Positive Teaching* strategies that shape good behaviour essential for learning in the classroom. *See 10 tactics sheet*

Supporting Programs

- Fluency & Vocabulary Program (delivery based on a clearly structured format)
- SRA Spelling Master Group Lesson (DI scripted program)
- Rewards Syllables Program (DI scripted program)

Volunteers

- give students the chance to read one-to-one for 15 minutes each day

Professor John Hattie - Effect Sizes (Growth Mindset/Self reported grades)

Focus is on changing students' attitude towards learning by helping them to develop an understanding that ongoing success comes from hard work and effort and is not something you are born with. The notion that it is best to compete against yourself rather than comparing yourself to others is constantly reinforced by the setting of individual ongoing goals.

MINILIT (Meeting Initial Needs In Literacy) Program

The MiniLit Program is an early intervention program designed for year one students who have been identified by their teachers as being as-risk of failure in the area of reading. It is seen as a

replacement program for the Reading Recovery Program. The program runs for one hour per day, four days a week over a period of 16 weeks.

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APPENDIX 2

Recent Results of the Exodus Literacy Centre Program

Project funding for Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan

Six monthly report on the Exodus Literacy Centres – Ashfield and Redfern

Intake 1, 2012 - August 2012

Preface

Over the first two terms the Exodus Foundation provided remedial literacy instruction to socially disadvantaged students. This report summarises overall student progress over that period. Findings are reported based on pre and post test analyses of literacy performance following two term MiniLit and MultiLit interventions.

Background

Students participating in the Exodus Foundation Literacy Centres in Sydney were assessed at the commencement and conclusion of two term periods of intensive literacy instruction using the MultiLit and MiniLit programs. The Literacy assessments were carried out by testers employed and trained by Exodus staff members who were independent of the instructional delivery of the program. Data was double scored and analysed by the senior managers and Business Services Coordinator. For a description of the assessment measures employed, see Appendixes for details of assessments used with MultiLit and MiniLit students.

MultiLit Instruction

There were 55 students who attended and completed the MultiLit program at the Sydney centres during the first two terms of 2012 for whom data from pre and post-testing is available. At program commencement the average age of the students was 11 years. MultiLit instruction was delivered to these students for three hours per day, five days a week over a period of 18 weeks.

Standardised and curriculum-based assessments of academic progress were carried out before the commencement of the program. Students were tested again at the end of their second term in the program.

At program commencement the average crude reading age for reading *accuracy* was 7 years 6 months. For reading *comprehension* the average crude reading age was 7 years 4 months as measured by the Neale Analysis. This represents 3 years 6 months below chronological age for reading accuracy and 3 years 7 months below chronological age for reading comprehension.

The results for students attending the Sydney Literacy Centres in Sydney during the first two terms of 2012 are as follows:

On average these students made crude gains of:

- 17 months in reading accuracy
- 14 months in reading comprehension
- 18 months in single word reading
- 16 months in spelling
- 29 months in phonological recoding

MiniLit Instruction

Of the students who attended the MiniLit program in both centres during the first two terms of 2012, complete pre- and post-data is available for 18 students who attended for at least 80% of the instructional time. The average age at program commencement was 6 years 11 months. MiniLit instruction was delivered to these students for one hour per day, four days a week.

Standardised and curriculum-based assessments of academic progress (see Appendix) were carried out before the commencement of the program. Students were tested again at the end of the second term in the program. The duration of the MiniLit program was 14 weeks of instruction.

On average the students made crude gains of:

- 6 months in single word reading
- 6 months in spelling
- 11 months in phonological recoding

Conclusions

For the purpose of this report we have accumulated the test results for all studens for whom we had complete data who attended two terms in the MultiLit or MiniLit programs at the Ashfield and Redfern Exodus Literacy Centres. On the basis of our analyses we may summarise the main conclusions of this project as follows:

- The gains made provide convincing, consistent evidence for the continuing high efficacy of the *MultiLit and MiniLit programs* in redressing reading difficulties in socially disadvantaged and Indigenous children.
- The gains made were consistent across the two Sydney sites.

Glenys O'Riley
National Education Manager
Exodus Foundation